



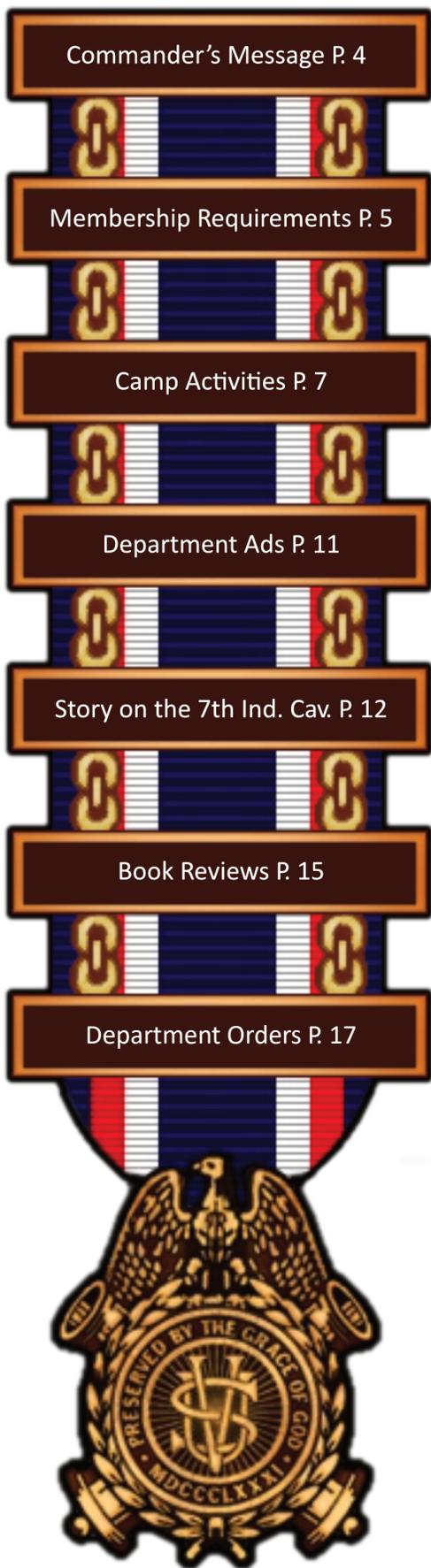
The Indiana Legion

Department of Indiana Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War



Brothers Jeff Maudlin & Taylin Allen post the colors of John B. Anderson Camp #223 in front of the Martin County Museum in preparation of the monument dedication for the 19th Illinois, who lost 28 soldiers in a train accident near Shoals, Indiana.

Photo Credit: Michael T. Wilson



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Department Camps

Name	Location
Orlando A. Somers #1	Kokomo
John W. Foster #2	Evansville
John Auten #8	South Bend
Champion Hill #17	Huntington
William P. Benton #28	Centerville
William Bumgarner #33	Bluffton
David D. Porter #116	Valparaiso
John B. Anderson #223	Columbus
Ben Harrison #356	Indianapolis
New Camp forming in Orange / Martin County: Contact Taylin Allen	

You can email an officer to be put in contact with a local camp.

The Department of Indiana is made up of 9 Camps spread over the state. Our membership is comprised of history enthusiasts, genealogists, and plain old patriotic Americans. We are an active Department that spends time and effort to honor the men who fought for and saved the Union. Whether that is by erecting or repairing monuments, markers & headstones, researching & documenting local Civil War History or otherwise, we continuously strive to keep green the memory of the "Boys in Blue."

We would love to have you join our ranks. If you enjoy this newsletter then you must have some affinity for the history of the Civil War and the men who fought it. We need passionate and motivated individuals such as you to join us in preserving our shared history. You will not only gain a fulfilling purpose in preserving that history, but a unique brotherhood where you will find camaraderie and support. I implore you, if you have so much as an inkling of interest, to contact an officer and explore the possibility of membership. *Qualifications for membership are found on page 5.*

In Fraternity, Charity & Loyalty: Taylin Allen - Editor.



UPCOMING Events

<p>December 20th Wreaths Across America William's Creek Cemetery 845 W 96th St, Indianapolis, IN 46260 Time: 12:00 p.m. EST</p>	<p>Benjamin Harrison Camp #356 will be hosting their annual Wreaths Across America ceremony at the Williams Creek Cemetery in Indianapolis, Indiana. Parking is somewhat limited, so plan to arrive earlier if you are traveling in for the event.</p>
<p>April 18th Department Annual Encampment Commandant's Home at the Indiana Veterans' Home 3848 N River Rd, West Lafayette, IN 47906 Time: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.</p>	<p>The Department of Indiana will again meet at the Commandant's Home in West Lafayette for our Annual Encampment. Important business of the Order will be conducted and Department officers will be elected or appointed.</p>
<p>Spring or Summer Cannon Dedication Soldier's Section, Oak Hill Cemetery in Evansville 1400 E Virginia St, Evansville, IN 47711 Time and Date: TBD</p>	<p>John W. Foster Camp #2 has spent a considerable amount of time and funds restoring two cannon carriages in Oak Hill Cemetery, Evansville, and plans are in the works for a dedication event.</p>
<p>Any events hosted by or in collaboration with the Department of Indiana or Camps therein can be submitted to the editor and will be placed in the newsletter. Bear in mind that that the newsletter is released quarterly.</p>	

For more details you can contact us on Facebook! We can also direct you towards who to contact for each event if you wish to participate. If you are involved in a project and you would like for us to take part, contact an officer and we will see what we can muster.

A lot of events are set up and take place between issues of *The Indiana Legion*. Follow the Department of Indiana at facebook.com/suvcwin or by scanning the QR code to stay up to date!. You can also visit our webpage at suvcwin.org to learn more about us.





Brothers of the Department of Indiana –

I wish to report that as I travel around the State to the various Camps performing the Installation ceremony I have been encouraged by the spirit of fraternity and brotherhood in our Department. It has been a joy to get out and visit with your Camps and meet many of you that I do not have the opportunity to see at a Department Encampment. Thank you to PDC Tom Schmitt for helping me install officers when I could not meet with those camps.

It pleases me to see the good work that is being done in the Camps to keep alive the memories of the Boys in Blue and to see that we are working to get more members involved in our order. Work is currently underway to establish new camps in Indiana.

Please continue to encourage Brothers to keep active and get involved in the activities of the Camp. Utilize social media to announce your meetings and continue to invite others who share a passion for history to join our Order.

I can report that the planning is underway for the Department Encampment in April, hosted by the Somers Camp. Please be on the lookout for more information about the event and plan to attend.

I hope that everyone has a safe and enjoyable holiday season.
Yours in F, C & L - Travis

While passing through Centerville on the way to our Mid Winter Encampment I stopped to visit the Center Township Library, a place of historical interest that I wanted to share. In 1873, Centerville and Richmond found themselves in a political fight over which city would be Wayne County's seat. Centerville had been the county seat for 55 years but by 1870 Richmond was more populous, had more businesses, collected more tax revenue and felt that they should be the county seat.

Richmond built a new courthouse and had sent their guards (police enforcement) to collect the records from Centerville's courthouse. After at first being thwarted by the citizens of Centerville, the Richmond guards managed to lock themselves inside of the courthouse. The citizen's response? They brought up a 3-pound cannon named "Black Betty", demanding surrender. When the guards refused they loaded it with scrap iron and promptly blew the doors off the hinges. The next day soldiers were brought in to facilitate the transfer of records and so ended Wayne County's "county seat war." The damage from the cannon can still be seen today, pictured here.



To support the good work of our Order, consider donating to the Department of Indiana Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War by contacting the Department Treasurer at treasurer@suvwin.org



Department Midwinter Encampment

The Department of Indiana met in Richmond for the Midwinter Encampment on November 1st to conduct business. The Civil War Nurses and Department By-Laws Committees reported their findings and gave some suggestions. The possibility of hosting a National Encampment is moving forward with a visitation from National to scout a number of hotels that could accommodate the Encampment, which we should hear more about in April. Junior Vice Commander Fred Leickly held a presentation on his ancestor's manuscript, which he had edited and annotated for a published book earlier this year, more on that on page 11. The host, William P. Benton Camp #28, called on the Department to help them in dealing with an extensive amount of inventory that has built up over several decades, most of which are Civil War related books that had been donated to the camp. Many other topics were discussed and if you missed out the minutes for the Midwinter Encampment should be available by April on the Department webpage.



MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War is a fraternal organization with over 6,500 members nationwide. Founded in 1881, we are the legal heirs of the Grand Army of the Republic, the chief veteran's organization made up of soldiers who served the Union during the Civil War. Our mission is to keep green the memory of the "Boys in Blue."

Full membership is open to men aged 14 or older who are directly descended from or a "Soldier, Sailor, Marine or member of the Revenue Cutter Service *or* directly descended from a brother, sister, half-brother, or half-sister of such Soldier who served in the United States armed forces between April 12, 1861, and April 9, 1865." **Junior membership** is open to those aged 6-14.

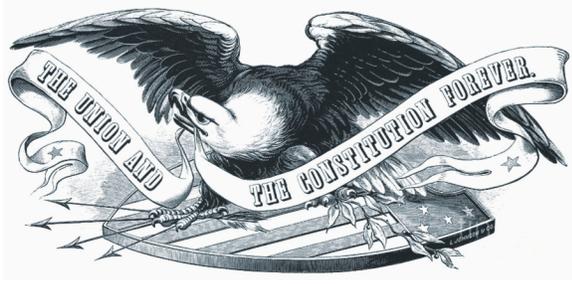
Associate membership is open to men who share the mission of the SUVCW but do not have or are in the process of establishing their ancestry.

Women may join one of the Allied Orders - Sister organizations with the same purpose. These are the Women's Relief Corps, the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War & The Auxiliary to the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. Active in Indiana are the Daughters of Union Veterans & Ladies of the GAR.

There is also the National Society Daughters of the Union, who are also active in Indiana.



Contact an officer for more information on how to join



Patriotic Instruction

Jonathan Swarts
Patriotic Instructor

Department Encampments play a vital role in the life of the Department of Indiana. They provide the setting where the essential business of our Order is conducted—electing officers, reviewing reports, and addressing the work of the Department for the months ahead. Through these gatherings, each Brother and Camp has a voice, and the collective direction of the Department is discussed and set.

Perhaps more importantly, beyond the necessary business, Encampments are an opportunity to reconnect with Brothers from across the state. Many of us only see one another at these gatherings, making Encampments an important time to renew friendships and build new ones. That fellowship is not simply social; it reinforces why we do this work. Camaraderie strengthens our commitment to honoring the memory of Union veterans and preserving their legacy. When Brothers gather in person, the shared sense of purpose becomes clearer, and the work of the Order feels both meaningful and rewarding.

The next opportunity to experience this combination of business and fellowship will be the Annual Department Encampment on April 18, 2026, at the Indiana Veterans' Home in West Lafayette. The Veterans' Home has hosted the Annual Encampment of the Department of Indiana for the past several years and has become a familiar and fitting location for our gathering. All Brothers from around the state are encouraged to attend and take part.

Until then, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!

Jonathan Swarts



Photo of the monument shortly after dedication

A new monument and interpretive panel was dedicated at the Martin County Museum in Shoals on September 20th to honor 28 soldiers of the 19th Illinois Volunteer Infantry by company and name. These soldiers were killed just east of Shoals on September 17th 1861, in a train wreck that garnered national attention at the time. The project was spearheaded by Brother Taylin Allen of John B. Anderson Camp #223, who began raising money for the monument in early 2024 through the Martin County Historical Society (MCHS), whose members supported the project from beginning to end. To help preserve and share the history of this tragedy the project was expanded to include an interpretive panel, which was funded in full with a grant from the Martin County Community Foundation.

The event ran from 10am to 4pm and featured presentations by President Lincoln (Dean Dorrell) and General U. S. Grant (Larry Werline, a Brother from Springfield Illinois), and a soldiers camp with reenactors of Company E, 19th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, who made the drive from Northern Illinois to honor the very men they portray. An estimated 250 people turned out over the course of the day to tour the Museum, enjoy presentations and learn about what it was like to be a soldier in the Civil War. President Lincoln talked about his early boyhood in Indiana & the election of 1860, while General Grant gave a history of his military career from the regular army to the end of the Civil War.



Photos courtesy of Michael T. Wilson. From left to right: Dean Dorrell, Larry Werline and the camp set up by Company E, 19th Illinois. Each presentation was packed with people and in between them the camp got plenty of attention. Everyone enjoyed themselves.



Of the 28 men who died in the train wreck, 20 of them were from Company I, which was raised in Galena Illinois. This prompted the Mayor of that town to travel and retrieve the bodies of men belonging there, where upon his return the townspeople had prepared a special plot in Greenwood Cemetery west of town, reserved for their honored dead.



Photos of Greenwood Cemetery & Bushrod Howard

Included among the dead in Company I was the Captain - Bushrod B. Howard, who's photo can be seen on the interpretive panel. Captain Howard was a veteran of the Mexican War, former state legislature and in the years leading up to the war Postmaster of Galena. He and his wife Elizabeth (Helen) were friends of Ulysses & Julia Grant, and are mentioned in their respective memoirs. Julia recounted that when Grant made his return to Galena after the war, he promised Captain Howard's widow, Elizabeth, that he would send her two young boys to West Point Military and Annapolis Naval Academies. True to his word, when elected President he did just that.



Thomas Benton Howard graduated from Annapolis in 1873 and rose to the rank of Admiral. Douglas A. Howard graduated West Point in 1878 and eventually became a Captain.



[Credit Michael T. Wilson]

A special guest from the Galena & U. S. Grant Museum, pictured here with Brother Allen, was Kris Chapman, who sits on the Board of Directors, made the way to Shoals to help honor the men. It was extra special, as she was one of four people to lay a bouquet of flowers for each Company of the regiment that lost men at the monument, naturally her bouquet was for Company I. She was also gifted an original rail spike from the same section of track as the accident by MCHS President Bill Greene, which she was very grateful for and noted that it will definitely make its way back to the Museum in Galena.

The dedication began at 2pm with a crowd of 120 onlookers. Brother Mike Beck opened the dedication by leading the 27th Indiana SVR and reenactors from the 19th Illinois & 49th Indiana in posting the colors next to the monument while a local minister gave opening prayer in a Civil War Chaplain's uniform. Brother Allen was the key speaker, and gave the history as mentioned above in detail before passing back to Brother Beck for the firing detail to close out the ceremony. The day was a huge success and the story of these men preserved for generations to come.



Firing detail & SVR Capt. Mike Beck during the ceremony. Credit Michael T. Wilson



Civil War Cannon Restored by the John W. Foster Camp No. 2

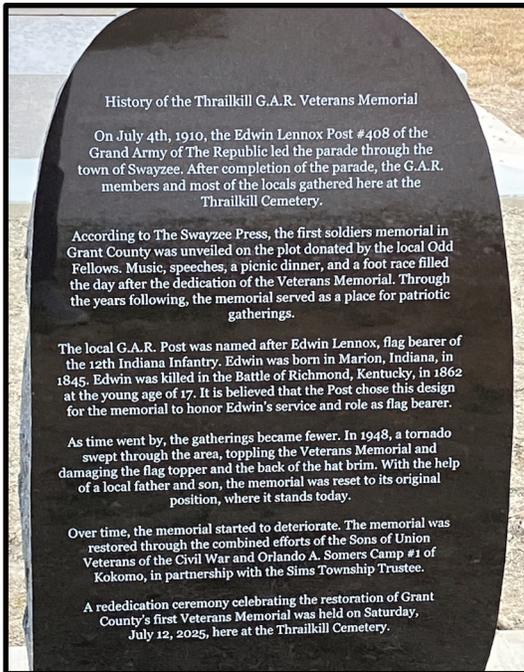
The John W. Foster Camp No. 2 recently completed the restoration of the first of two Civil War cannons that have sat in the Soldiers' Section at Oak Hill Cemetery in Evansville, Indiana since 1882. This cannon has a long history in Evansville dating back to April 1861. Within a week after Fort Sumter fell, the mechanics of Evansville held a meeting to manufacture at least two of their



own cannons for the defense of Evansville. One was constructed by the Evansville & Crawfordsville Railroad and the second by the Kratz & Heilman Foundry in Evansville. The cannon recently restored was manufactured by the latter company during April and May 1861. On May 17, 1861, the Kratz & Heilman cannon was test fired successfully and served to defend Evansville throughout the war. Through the years, this cannon has been restored by various individuals but unfortunately the wooden carriages were never intended to be a permanent repair due to the constant exposure to the elements. In 2022, the John W. Foster Camp No. 2 decided to resolve the issue and replace the carriage with a more durable material to withstand the constant changes in weather that have caused the deterioration of the carriages over the years. Funds were raised and a contract was given to the Clarksville Foundry in Clarksville, Tennessee. Within a couple months the ductile iron carriage parts were completed and ready to be picked up.

Brothers Dennis Hutchinson PDC and Camp Commander David Hoesli made the trip to Clarksville on September 29th, 2025 to pick up the cast parts and brought them back for assembly. After a full month of drilling, grinding and fitting the cast iron pieces, the carriage and barrel were assembled, primed and painted. We were ready to meet our deadline to have the cannon back in the Soldiers Section before Veterans Day. Unfortunately, we could not deliver the cannon until the day after Veterans Day due to an unexpected light snow that caused the roads to be too slick to deliver the cannon. The cannon was placed on temporary concrete pedestals until a more proper foundation can be laid in the spring. The second cannon carriage made by the E & C Railroad in 1861 is still in the works with the University of Southern Indiana's Advanced Engineering Department leading the way. Completion is expected in spring of 2026. Once completed and placed back at the Soldiers Section, a ceremony will take place to dedicate both cannons.





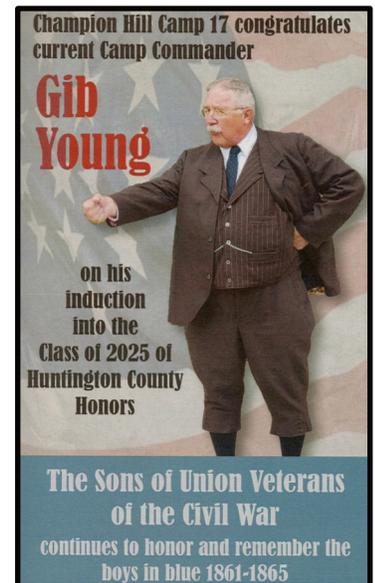
A new addition to the Thraikill Cemetery, north of Swayzee Indiana has recently been placed. After Orlando A. Somers Camp #1 fundraiser and restoration of the Soldier’s Monument in the cemetery in July, the township trustee, spurred by the Camp’s efforts, spearheaded the reconstruction of the foundation to the monument to insure that it will stand for future generations as well as adding a marker with the history of the monument.

Also placed by the trustee was this black granite monument detailing the history of the Soldier’s Monument up to and including the restoration efforts by Somers Camp.

What better example can be made of the inspiration and cascading effects that can be spurred on by the activities of our Order? This should serve as encouragement to all Camps in the Department to redouble their efforts and to work closely with local officials and societies for their projects.

Commander of Champion Hill Camp #17, Gib Young, was recently honored by the City of Huntington in their “Huntington County Honors” Class of 2025. This is a program that since its creation in 2014 has aimed to “brings to light the achievements, work, and service of those with ties to the community who have made a lasting impact on Huntington County.” Honorees are chosen every year based on 5 criteria: Athletics & Recreation - Business & Professional - Community & Public Service, Humanities and finally Cultural & Historical.

Brother Young was honored for his Cultural & Historical achievements. The following is an excerpt on Brother Young from the program: *“Gilbert “Gib” Young has also been involved locally throughout his life, particularly with organizations focused on community history. He is best known, however, as a historical interpreter of his look-alike, Theodore Roosevelt. Immersing himself in the life of the former president, Young’s presentations have taken him across the country.”*

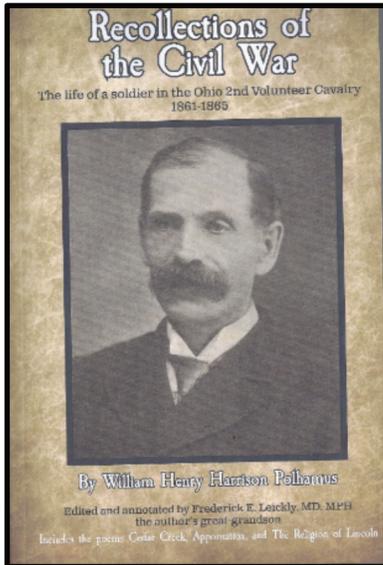


Members of Benjamin Harrison Camp were invited to attend a dedication ceremony on October 25th hosted by the Crawfordsville American Legion Post #72 and Dorothy Q Chapter of the NSDAR for the new headstone of Civil War veteran John Hardee, located at the Weir Cemetery near Crawfordsville Indiana.

John Hardee was born in 1819 in Kentucky and was a veteran of the Mexican and Black Hawk Wars. In January 1864 he enlisted in the 120th Indiana Infantry but soon after was stricken with chronic diarrhea and typhoid fever from which he suffered greatly. So severe was his condition that he was transferred to the 18th Regiment Veteran Reserve Corps by the end of 1864, ultimately being discharged on disability in September of 1865. He continued to suffer from the effects of diseases contracted during his service and died of complications in 1874.



Department Advertisements



Edited and annotated by Brother Fred Leickly, *Recollections of the Civil War: The life of a soldier in the Ohio 2nd Volunteer Cavalry 1861-1865* is the long over-due publishing of Sergeant William H. H. Polhamus' manuscript detailing his experiences during the Civil War.

Polhamus, who is Fred Leickly's Great Grandfather, wrote this manuscript in and around the 1890s. In the preface Polhamus makes it clear, these are the recollections of a soldier in the War of the Rebellion nearly 1/3rd of a century after the fact. It makes no attempt to create a history of the war or even of his own regiment, but rather to summarize, from memory, his own experiences and should be read with that in mind.

Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0FH64SZVM>

Barnes and Noble: <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/1147808220?ean=9798897110018>

The Ben Harrison Camp now has a sufficient stock of these "Last Union Veteran" coins and they are now available to anyone who would like to purchase them at a cost of \$10.00 each, plus shipping, if not purchased in-person. The coins are inscribed with "LAST UNION VETERAN BURIED IN THIS COUNTY 1861-1865" and the colors are rated to last through about three years of sun exposure.

To attach the coin to the stone it is recommended to use either a 2 part epoxy or heavy duty double sided tape. Ben Harrison Camp prefers to use 3M VHB Double Sided Tape, available on amazon and it has held up very well through all the weather that you are familiar with here in Indiana.



For order information contact Mike Beck (email: fsgtcod11thindiana@att.net).



You may have found yourself looking at the red, almost fort shaped, symbol within the image of the State of Indiana found on the cover and top of each page and wondered; "What is that?" That would be the Indiana Sons of Veterans Corps Badge, dating back to the 1880's when the Sons resembled more of a militia. Most states had their own corps badges in the Sons and this one is unique to Indiana, although the modern pin seen here has the added imagery of our State Flag.

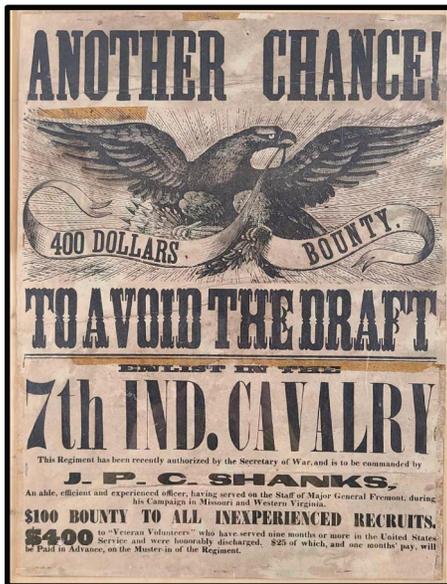
These pins are double clutched, 1.25 inches square and available for \$5.00, plus shipping unless purchased in person.

For order information contact Tim Beckman (email: timbeckman@gmail.com)



At War With Guerrillas in Tennessee

With Company F, 7th Indiana Cavalry



While researching the 7th Indiana Cavalry and their involvement in the pursuit of Confederate General Sterling Price during his Missouri Expedition of September to November of 1864, I came across the names of some soldiers all killed on the same day; October 4th 1864 "Memphis Tennessee." Upon further inspection it was revealed that while the bulk of the regiment was in pursuit of Price, Company F was left behind in Memphis as a detachment for the defense of that city, which had been the scene of battle as recent as August 21st of the same year. Sparing the details, Nathan Bedford Forrest (CSA) had led a daring raid into the city and managed to escape with nearly 500 Union prisoners. This, coupled with the nearby countryside being "infested with guerrillas" just outside the Union lines is the probable reason that Company F, among other units, remained there while the bulk of Union forces were being shifted to support Generals Rosecrans & Curtis in Missouri.

That guerrillas in question were led by a man known as "Dick Davis," who had made quite a name for himself over the Summer & Fall of 1864 in Northern Mississippi and Southwestern Tennessee around Nonconnah Creek and the Coldwater River areas. Company F was frequently engaged attempts to root out these guerrillas as well as in patrols and manning various picket outpost around Memphis. In the *"History of the Seventh Indiana Cavalry Volunteers,"* the source of most of this article, it was stated that these guerrillas were feared more than Forrest himself, as it was widely believed that a soldier could not expect any quarter should he be captured by them. On the night of October 3rd Captain Joseph W Skelton of Company F was returning from a scouting mission from around Nonconnah Creek when about six miles from camp he lost some horses that ended up trapped in a ravine. It was impossible to get them out, the banks were too steep and the men could not see, so it was decided to put the task off until the morning.

When the morning came Captain Skelton assigned **Corporal Archibald Inglis** with six privates for the task, these men were; **Charles Fennimore, Henry Gabriel, Hiram Iseminger, Herman Kile, John Redding** and **Ashbury Ritter**. Inglis had one man act as a sentinel while the rest of the men got to work on freeing the horses from the ravine. The men had naturally laid down their guns in order to do so and it was while they were employed in this work that "Dick Davis" and his men came up on them with his men and made a charge. Not able to defend themselves, the Union men surrendered. Davis marched the Hoosiers to a creek (possibly the Coldwater River, in Mississippi) a few hundred yards away, then had them seated on a log that crossed the stream and promptly ordered them shot. All seven Hoosiers were murdered in cold blood. Not satisfied with the crime Davis fastened a note to a nearby tree, threatening the same fate to anyone who would dare bury the Union soldiers.



Private John Redding

After some time and not returning, Captain Skelton, fearing for the safety of his men, organized a large body of soldiers and rode hard to the ravine where the horses had been stuck. When he arrived, it was learned that his men had been captured by Dick Davis. It was hoped that the men from Company F would be treated as prisoners of war, since there was no evidence of bloodshed at the scene of their capture. It didn't take long however for the news of their murder to spread. A day or so later a young lady had come across the deathly scene and, horrified, made for Memphis where she gave descriptions of the aforementioned soldiers, providing paperwork found on their bodies that proved their identities beyond a shadow of a doubt.

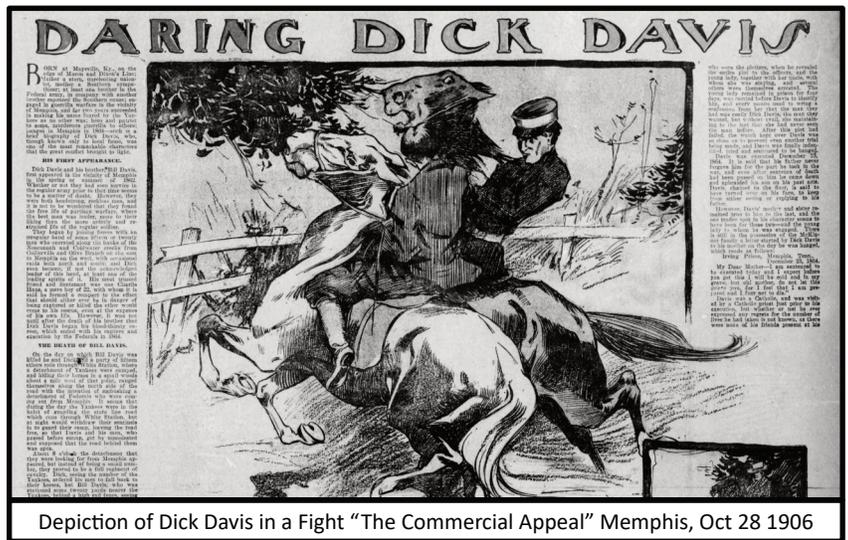


At War With Guerrillas in Tennessee

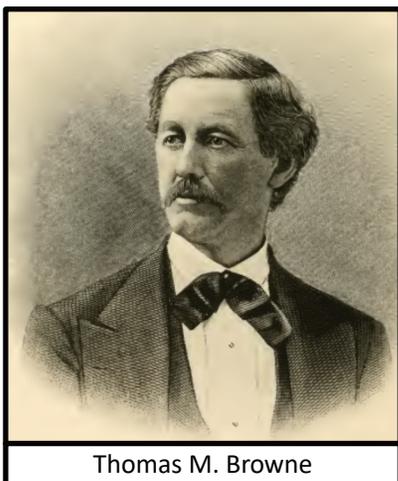
With Company F, 7th Indiana Cavalry

Captain Skelton and the men of Company F were furious at the news, and naturally begging for the opportunity to capture Dick Davis in order to avenge their comrades. Skelton received permission to pursue Davis and so lead his men towards Nonconnah Creek, some 20 miles East from Memphis and very near to the Mississippi border, where the notorious guerrillas were known to operate. Finding nothing around the Nonconnah, Company F pressed on south into Mississippi, towards the Coldwater River.

On October 7th the Hoosiers crossed the Coldwater, and at the first house they came upon captured a few prisoners. Encouraged by their success they continued until coming up to another house from which they were fired upon by surprise. The guerrillas inside immediately dashed for the woods from the house and most of Company F charged them to prevent the scoundrels from escaping. When Captain Skelton rode up he spotted two men trying to make their escape through the garden in rear of the house towards the woods, seeing that there were two fences between him and the enemy, Skelton had his horse leap over the first fence before noticing that one of the men was slowing his pace. Immediately recognizing that the man was loading his rifle, Skelton spurred his horse in a mad dash, clearing the second fence and closing the distance in record time. Wheeling his horse to a stop and placing his revolver at the man's head, he demanded him to surrender. In response the man said "I guess I will have to surrender, but damn it, I thought I could load and kill you before you came up, but you was too quick for me."



Captain Skelton didn't know it yet but he had just captured Dick Davis, who was wisely keeping his identity a secret, for if the men of Company F had known it is likely he would have been shot dead then and there. It wasn't until the notorious Davis was behind bars at Irving Block Prison in Memphis that he would be recognized, but by that time justice was in the hands of the gavel and not the sword.



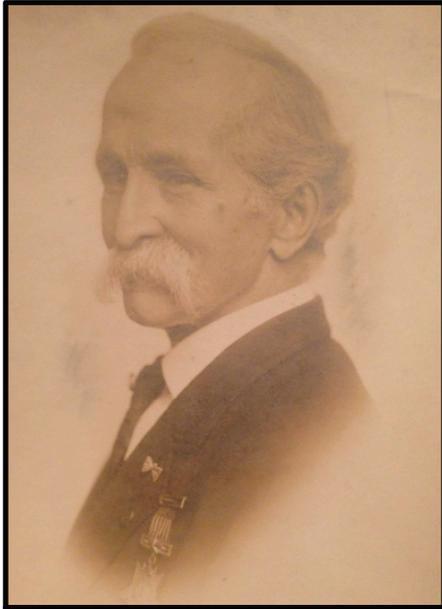
Thomas M. Browne

What followed was the most interesting, intense trial of Tennessee during the war, with Colonel Thomas M. Browne of the 7th Indiana, who had also remained in Memphis, presiding over it. The Tennessee Bar Association even has a full blog entry on their webpage by Russell Fowler, dated February 1st 2016 if you are interested in reading it. I will summarize it here, as this is getting long. Davis' sympathizers pay for his defense and manage to drag the trial out two months, he escapes, is recaptured and attempts to escape again but fails. Shocking witness testimony of an Illinois soldier reveals that Davis murdered a number of soldiers from Illinois, including a Captain, during the Union's retreat from the Battle of Brice's Crossroads. It is also revealed that Davis was deserter from the *Union* army, purportedly having been in an Ohio regiment and possibly a rebel spy aligned with General John Hunt Morgan. The trial did not go in Davis' favor. He was found guilty and hung on December 23rd, 1864.



At War With Guerrillas in Tennessee

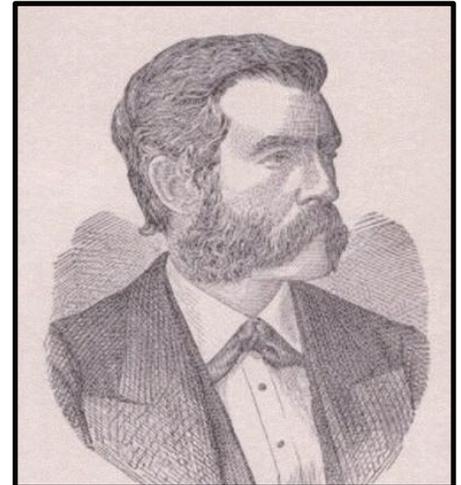
With Company F, 7th Indiana Cavalry



Adam H. Shoemaker With GAR Badge

Back in late October, while the trial was just beginning, a detachment of Company F led by Corporal Adam Shoemaker was ordered to man a picket post known for getting harassed by guerrillas, who had picked several soldiers off in recent months. The guerrillas did this with such regularity that Corporal Shoemaker opted to set up his post in the yard of a nearby house. In the early hours of the next morning, a man was heard rustling in the bushes sneaking up on the empty picket post and our alert Corporal lay in wait with his rifle aimed at the noise. Finally spotting a man crawling on the ground with a gun in hand, Corporal Shoemaker lined up his sights and fired. Immediately at the sound of his rifle discharging a dozen mounted guerrillas dashed from around a bend down the road towards the old picket post, believing that the shot was from their comrade who had drawn the short end of the stick. The rest of the detachment of Company F came up and gave the guerrillas a volley of lead which caused them to scatter in all directions. Corporal Shoemaker made his way to the old picket post to find his shot had hit its mark, mortally wounding an “officer” who lived long enough to let it be known that he was the successor to Dick Davis.

1st Lieutenant Thomas S. Cogley, author of *The History of the Seventh Indiana Cavalry Volunteers* relates that the details of Dick Davis’ capture and murder seven members of Company F was learned in 1865. While Cogley recalls that it was the summer of 1865, it was in all likelihood March of 1865 when the 7th Indiana Cavalry went on a week long expedition into Northern Mississippi that took them near to Dick Davis’ old territory. While on this expedition Cogley recounts that they captured a two rebels and by chance had happened to pass a freedman who recognized the men as part of Davis’ guerrilla band. After the two men denied the accusation, Cogley pressed the freedman to make a statement, to which he spoke so directly and confidently about the two men and their connection to Davis that they did not deny it a second time. After offering to take Cogley to some locals who would corroborate the facts, the two men confessed to being not only part of Dick Davis’ guerrilla band but to being present at the time of the murders in October. The two men were nearly hung on the spot but Captain Skelton intervened and opted to take them prisoner back to Memphis. However, somewhere along the march the detachment of men escorting the guerrillas claimed that the two men got loose and started to run. In an attempt to stop them the detachment fired on them but, according to those men in the detachment, the two men “escaped.” Justice may very well have been in the hand of the sword, and not the gavel that day. So it was that Company F’s intertwined fate with these guerrillas came to a close.

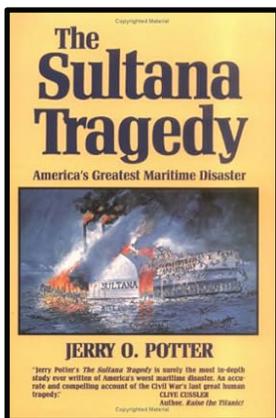


Thomas S. Cogley

I didn’t anticipate this article taking up three pages when I set out to write it but I hope it was a good read nonetheless. I was captivated by the drama involved in this story and I think it serves as a perfect example that the brutality of the conflict was not limited to the large battlefields that every student of the Civil War is intimately familiar with. If the story rings a bell it is probably because Military Images Magazine had a piece on it in their November/December issue in 2003 titled “Corporal Shoemaker’s Revenge.” I found that out after having written all of this.



Reviews and Recommendations



As many Bothers know, on behalf of the Department of Indiana, through the dedication of Ben Harrison Camp and PDC Tom Schmitt, we have placed a monument to the memory of the Sultana disaster at the National Veterans Memorial Shrine and Museum in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Although I was aware of this historical disaster I had not read in depth on the tragedy until I came across this book in the Visitor's Center at Parkers Cross Roads, Tennessee.

Jerry O. Potter's: *The Sultana Tragedy* resurrects a largely forgotten yet monumental disaster from the ashes of American history. The book meticulously details the horrific events of April 27, 1865, when the steamboat Sultana exploded and sank in the Mississippi River, just north of Memphis, Tennessee.

The disaster claimed the lives of an estimated 1,800 people, making it the deadliest maritime disaster in U.S. history—a death toll that surpasses even the Titanic. The overwhelming majority of the victims were recently paroled Union soldiers from Confederate prison camps like Andersonville and Cahaba. Having survived the horrors of war and imprisonment, these men were packed onto the Sultana for what should have been their final, joyous journey home.

Potter reconstructs the perfect storm of greed, negligence, and corruption that led to the tragedy. The Sultana, with a legal carrying capacity of only 376 passengers, was dangerously overcrowded with over 2,300 people. This was the result of a corrupt scheme: Union officers at Vicksburg, Mississippi, were allegedly taking kickbacks from the ship's captain, J. Cass Mason, to guarantee him a full load of soldiers, for which the government was paying a steep price per head.

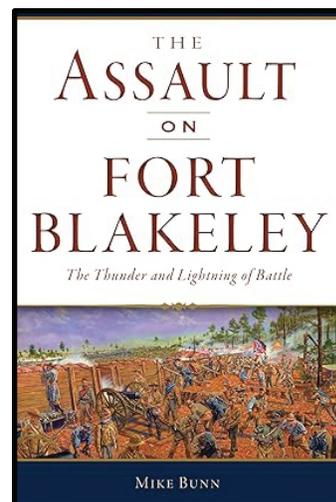
Compounding the danger was a critical mechanical failure. One of the ship's four boilers had a serious leak and was given a hasty, shoddy patch in Vicksburg rather than a proper, time-consuming repair. Weighed down by its human cargo and straining against a powerful spring current, the faulty boiler exploded, setting off a chain reaction with two other boilers. The explosion instantly killed hundreds and turned the wooden vessel into a floating inferno, plunging the remaining passengers—many of them already sick and weak from prison—into the cold, dark waters of the Mississippi.

Potter recounts the factors that contributed to the disaster and why the Sultana became a “forgotten” tragedy; Human greed & corruption, criminal negligence, and the injustice of the aftermath. I have found the book to not only be important from the historical perspective but most of all from the impact of the human tragedy of the disaster. To me, if you have an interest in the history of the Civil War you can't complete your study without reading this book on the Sultana Tragedy.

William Adams, PDC

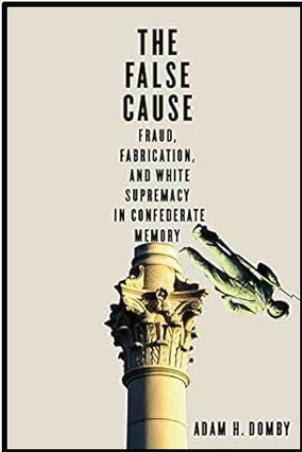
The Assault on Fort Blakely: The Thunder and Lightning of Battle by Mike Bunn is the only available work focused solely on the battle of Fort Blakely that one can get their hands on, while there are a good handful that deal with the larger Mobile Campaign. It's a unique approach for a book and basically serves as a readily available source of reference material for all of the units involved. After the prelude leading up to the assault on Fort Blakely, which only lasted about 20 minutes, the author breaks up the battle into sections where the reader can “zoom in” on a particular portion of the battlefield. These sections are divided into chapters with each of them providing first hand accounts and reports of **nearly every regiment involved**. It's worth a buy if for no other reason than that. The battle is noteworthy for being the last grand charge of the war featuring 16,000 Union soldiers, including thousands of Colored Troops, just hours after Robert E. Lee's surrender on April 9th.

Taylin Allen





Reviews and Recommendations



The False Cause; Fraud, Fabrication, and White Supremacy in Confederate Memory by Adam H. Dombey, University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville and London, 2020.

Members of John B. Anderson Camp participate in the Bartholomew County Public Library's Civil War Book Club. It is a great way to share our passion about history, and it gives us exposure within the community. The latest offering was either loved or hated which meant fully read or partially. Either way, the conversation was intense and thoughtful.

I tend to mark passages of interest with a book dart – a small metal clip. This read employed over 200 such clips which were translated into 8 pages of notes for discussion. I did not love the book, but clearly, I found it very interesting with a few points about our approach to history. The book is 258 pages with a good proportion dedicated to references/foot notes (the text part is 170 pages)

We have all heard about the 'Lost Cause', the more romantic cover that replaced the fight for slavery with the fight for states' rights (or per the movie Gettysburg, our rats'). 'The False Cause' is divided into a lengthy introduction and 5 Chapters; 1. Rewriting the Past in Stone: Monuments, North Carolina Politics, and Jim Crow 1890-1929, 2. Inventing Confederates: Creating Heroes to Maintain White Supremacy, 1900-1951, 3. The Loyal Deserters: Confederate Pension Fraud in Civil War Memory, 1901-1940, 4. Playing the Faithful Slave: Pensions for Ex-Slaves and Free People of Color, 1905-1951, and 5. The Soldiers Who Weren't: How Loyal Slaves Became "Black Confederates", 1910-2018. He wraps it up with the Epilogue.

There is history, what a trained historian does, as a reasoned reconstruction of the past rooted in research. Then there is historical memory, what the public recalls, personal memories which are subjective and molded into a fitting narrative - or simply lie about something to serve a specific purpose(s). The author points that in contemporary times, online research will allow anyone to research a topic. However, these postings often circumvent traditional guardians of quality like peer review and editors, 'Anyone can make up a story or an interpretation without any critical consideration and post it online.

My takeaway message from this read is that when reading, interpreting, researching, and writing about history we need to be careful and critical, question what you read. Be satisfied that your questions have been answered with valid references. The book addresses monument issues, repeatedly noting that a monument in front of a courthouse sends a different message than the monument in a cemetery. The work suffers from repetitiveness; many anecdotal supportive stories saying the same thing. This leads to significant reader fatigue, my guess is that this could have been condensed into an essay. You will find support for the historical rewrite of the War as being the Lost Cause, concerning and eye-opening.

Fred Leickly.



Department Communications 2025-2026



Department Order #1: Acknowledgment and courtesies of the new Commander's election. Transfer of headquarters & contact information. Announcement of all Department elected and appointed officers.

Circular #1: Communicates the importance of growth in the Department and the need to adopt a strategy of Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation.

Department Order #2: In tandem with Circular #1 this General Order establishes the following awards for recruitment: The **Oliver P. Morton Award** for Camps & the **Lew Wallace Award** for Brothers that recruit the most members between our annual April encampment. Should there be a tie, both Camps and/or Brothers will receive the award.



Department Order #3: Establishment of two Department Committees, one for the Department's Civil War Nurses Project and the other to review the Department By-laws.

Department Order #4: Announcing the passing of Department Treasurer and Brother Drew Godby

Department Order #5: Announcing the passing of Brother Ernest Eugene Stone

Department Order #6: Appointment of Brother Ronald L. Hyer as Department Treasurer

Department Order #7: Appointment of Brother Brian Mexin as Assistant Department Treasurer

Department Order #8: Notification of Department Mid-Year Encampment

Circular #2 Communicates the need for a social media presence of Camps in the Department

Department Order #9: Deals with installing Camp Officers by the Department Commander

Department Order #10: Appointment of Brother George Franz to Department ROTC Coordinator

Department Order #11: Establishment of a Department Fundraising Committee

To read the orders in full, visit suvwin.org and navigate to "Department Orders and Communications"

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) is a fraternal organization dedicated to preserving the history and legacy of veteran heroes who fought and worked to save the Union in the American Civil War. Organized in 1881 and chartered by Congress in 1954, SUVCW is the legal heir and successor to the Grand Army of the Republic.



A portion of the crowd of onlookers listen as SVR Captain Mike Beck opens the monument dedication ceremony in Shoals, Martin County. The new interpretive marker can also be seen, the monument sits just off camera to the right.

SUBMISSIONS

The Indiana Legion is the official newsletter of the Department of Indiana, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, published every quarter. If you would like to contribute an article, column or some small filler content, you can contact the editor at legion@suvcw.org

MEMBERSHIP

If the information is not filled out in the box to the right and you are curious about membership, contact information for officers who can assist you are on page two.

Camp: _____

Location: _____

Contact: _____
